

Editorial Guidelines

Guardian News & Media Editorial Code

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Contents

Summary	2
1: Professional practice	2
2: Personal behaviour and conflicts of interest	5
3: Appendices	8
3.1: The PCC Code of Conduct	8
3.2: CP Scott's essay	12
3.4: Areas of interest and companies that GMG holds	13

Summary

“A newspaper’s primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted.”

Our most important currency is trust. This is as true today as when CP Scott marked the centenary of the founding of the Guardian with his famous essay on journalism in 1921.

The purpose of this code is, above all, to protect and foster the bond of trust between GNM (in print and online) and its readers, and therefore to protect the integrity of GNM and its journalism, however it is published.

As a set of guidelines this will not form part of a journalist’s contract of employment, nor will it form part, for either editorial management or journalists, of disciplinary, promotional or recruitment procedures. However, by observing the code, journalists working for GNM will be protecting the independence, standing and reputation of themselves and their colleagues. It is important that freelancers also abide by these guidelines while on assignment for GNM.

Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice

GNM – in common with most news publishers in Britain – considers the PCC’s Code of Practice to be a sound statement of ethical behaviour for journalists. It is written into our terms of employment that staff should adhere to the Code of Practice. It is published below so that all editorial staff can familiarise themselves with it — and comments in this document that relate to the PCC Code are marked with an asterisk.

1. Professional practice

Attribution

a) **Anonymous quotations** We recognise that people will often speak more honestly if they are allowed to speak anonymously. The use of non-attributed quotes can therefore often assist the reader towards a truer understanding of a subject than if a journalist confined him/herself to quoting bland on-the-record quotes. But if used lazily or indiscriminately anonymous quotes become a menace.

We should be honest about our sources, even if we can’t name them.

The New York Times policy on pejorative quotes is worth bearing in mind: “The vivid language of direct quotation confers an unfair advantage on a speaker or writer who hides behind the newspaper, and turns of phrase are valueless to a reader who cannot assess the source.”

There may be exceptional circumstances when anonymous pejorative quotes may be used, but they will be rare — and only after consultation with the senior editor of the day. In the absence of specific approval we should paraphrase anonymous pejorative quotes.

b) **Anonymous contributions** Articles commissioned by GNM should be published anonymously or pseudonymously only in exceptional circumstances, for example where the author’s safety, privacy or livelihood may be compromised, and only with the permission of the relevant editor or managing editor. In these cases, readers should be made aware that identities have been obscured or withheld. This provision need not apply to user-generated content published or reproduced on our print and digital platforms, or to authors with established pseudonyms commissioned or hosted by GNM in that capacity.

c) **Credits** Staff must not reproduce other people’s material without attribution, other than in exceptional circumstances — for example where the source cannot be identified — and only with permission of the most senior editor on duty. The source of published material obtained from another organisation should be acknowledged, including quotes taken from other newspaper articles. Bylines should be carried only on material that is substantially the work of the bylined journalist. If an article contains a significant amount of agency copy then the agency should be credited.

Bribery and facilitation payments The Bribery Act 2010 takes a robust approach to bribery, and creates a number of criminal offences, which even if committed abroad can be prosecuted in the UK. These include (i) bribery - ie offering someone in the UK or abroad a financial or other advantage to improperly perform an activity (whether public or private), (ii) being bribed and (iii) bribing a foreign public official. In some circumstances, offers or acceptances of hospitality and / or facilitation payments paid to public officials abroad in order to secure or expedite the performance of a routine or necessary action will come within the Act. There is no public interest defence, although where an individual is left with no alternative but to make a facilitation payment in order to protect against loss of life, limb or liberty there may be a defence of duress. Staff should always discuss with their managing editor beforehand if they are concerned that any payments might fall into these categories and, if such payments are requested or made, they should inform the editor-in-chief or their managing editor of the circumstances as soon as they are able to afterwards. (See also 'Freebies', in Personal Behaviour and Conflicts of Interest)

Children* Special care should be taken when dealing with children (under the age of 16). Heads of departments must be informed when children have been photographed or interviewed without parental consent. Articles that include significant intrusions into children's private lives without their understanding and consent need a strong public interest justification.

In view of the longevity of online material, editors should consider whether children's identities should be obscured to protect them from embarrassment or harm as they grow older.

These provisions extend to writers who are considering making their own children the subject of an article. Consent to publication should be sought where the child is reasonably considered able to make an informed decision.

Section 6 of the PCC code should be studied carefully.

Commissioning GNM supports good commissioning practice, including fair treatment of freelancers. Editors should make reference to the GNM's Freelance Charter when commissioning new contributors. See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/info/guardian-news-media-freelance-charter>

Copy approval The general rule is that no one should be given the right to copy approval. In certain circumstances we may allow people to see copy or quotes but we are not required to alter copy. We should avoid offering copy approval as a method of securing interviews or co-operation.

Copyright Journalists should not use content from non-authorised third-party sources - whether pictures, text or other media - without obtaining the necessary permissions. There are limited legal situations where permission may not be needed but you must check with the picture desk or editorial legal before using without permission. Journalists should especially familiarise themselves with the guidelines on "rights and use of content from public websites", available on GNM's internal Really Social Media site on Spike.

Direct quotations Should not be changed to alter their context or meaning.

Endorsements Journalists should not agree to promote through copy, photographs or footnotes the financial interests of prospective interviewees or contributors, or their sponsors, as a means of securing access to them. Promotional information about a subject or author provided in footnotes should be included only where, in the editor's judgment, it is of genuine interest or assistance to the reader.

Errors It is the policy of the GNM to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Journalists have a duty to cooperate frankly and openly with the Guardian and Observer readers' editors and to report errors to them. All complaints should be brought to the attention of the readers' editors. All journalists should read both the daily and Sunday corrections columns by the readers' editors.

External assistance Journalists should not engage the paid services of external non-journalistic agents or assistants without the prior knowledge and approval of the editor-in-chief.

Fairness “The voice of opponents no less than of friends has a right to be heard . . . It is well be to be frank; it is even better to be fair” (CP Scott, 1921). The more serious the criticism or allegations we are reporting the greater the obligation to allow the subject the opportunity to respond.

Grief* People should be treated with sensitivity during periods of grief and trauma. (See PCC code, section 5)

Language Respect for the reader demands that we should not casually use words that are likely to offend. Use swear words only when absolutely necessary to the facts of a piece, or to portray a character in an article; there is almost never a case in which we need to use a swearword outside direct quotes. The stronger the swearword, the harder we ought to think about using it. Avoid using in headlines, pull quotes and standfirsts and never use asterisks, which are just a cop-out.

Legal Our libel and contempt laws are complex, and constantly developing. The consequences of losing actions can be expensive and damaging for our reputation. Staff should a) familiarise themselves with the current state of the law and seek training if they feel unconfident about aspects of it; b) consult our in-house legal department or night lawyers about specific concerns on stories; c) read the regular legal bulletins about active cases and injunctions emailed by the legal department.

Payment In general, GNM does not pay for stories, except from bona fide freelance sources. The editor or his deputies must approve rare exceptions.

PCC and libel judgments Judgments by the PCC and the outcome of defamation actions relating to GNM should be reported promptly.

Photographs Digitally enhanced or altered images, montages and illustrations should be clearly labeled as such.

Privacy* In keeping with both the PCC Code and the Human Rights Act we believe in respecting people's privacy. Much journalism may be intrinsically intrusive but we should avoid invading anyone's privacy unless there is a clear public interest in doing so. Proportionality is essential, as is proper prior consideration where privacy issues may be involved. To borrow from the recommendations made by the former UK Security and Intelligence Coordinator Sir David Omand for his own field of inquiry: the degree of intrusion must be justified by the seriousness of the story and the public good that is likely to follow from its publication. Likewise the grounds for investigation must be strong; we do not conduct 'fishing' expeditions unless the issue, suspicion and prospects of success are all serious. Caution should also be exercised about reporting and publishing identifying details, such as street names and numbers, that may enable others to intrude on the privacy or safety of people who have become the subject of media coverage. (See PCC code, section 3)

To adapt the Omand principles, here are five questions we should ask ourselves about a situation in which we are considering intruding on privacy:

1. There must be sufficient cause – the intrusion needs to be justified by the scale of potential harm that might result from it.
2. There must be integrity of motive - the intrusion must be justified in terms of the public good that would follow from publication
3. The methods used must be in proportion to the seriousness of story and its public interest, using the minimum possible intrusion.
4. There must be proper authority – any intrusion must be authorised at a sufficiently senior level and with appropriate oversight.
5. There must be a reasonable prospect of success; fishing expeditions are not justified

Race In general, we do not publish someone's race or ethnic background or religion unless that information is pertinent to the story. We do not report the race of criminal suspects unless their ethnic background is part of a description that seeks to identify them or is an important part of the story (for example, if the crime was a hate crime).

Sources Sources promised confidentiality must be protected at all costs. However, where possible, the sources of information should be identified as specifically as possible.

Subterfuge* Journalists should generally identify themselves as GNM employees when working on a story. There may be instances involving stories of exceptional public interest where this does not apply, but this needs the approval of a head of department. See PCC code, section 10. This applies to anything we publish, including any information obtained by the subterfuge of others.

Suicide* Journalists are asked to exercise particular care in reporting suicide or issues involving suicide, bearing in mind the risk of encouraging others. This should be borne in mind both in presentation, including the use of pictures, and in describing the method of suicide. Any substances should be referred to in general rather than specific terms if possible. When appropriate a helpline number should be given (eg Samaritans 08457 90 90 90). The feelings of relatives should also be carefully considered. See PCC code, section 5 (ii)

Verification Trust in the authenticity and reliability of our sources is essential. Digital communications and a fast-moving news environment present special challenges for verification, and scepticism should therefore be the starting point for web and email sources. We must be tenacious in seeking reliable corroboration and should state the level of substantiation we have been able to achieve (eg, "the Guardian has been unable independently to verify the facts"). Do not state as fact information about or from someone who we cannot authenticate (eg, "A student who says she witnessed the riot", not "A student who witnessed the riot"). Where relevant we must be open with readers in saying what medium was used to conduct an interview. Satisfaction with sources is the responsibility of desk editors as well as reporters and correspondents, and sub-editors should be confident in challenging the dependability of information.

2. Personal behaviour and conflicts of interest

We value our reputation for independence and integrity. Journalists clearly have lives, interests, hobbies, convictions and beliefs outside their work. Nothing in the following guidelines is intended to restrict any of that. It is intended to ensure that outside interests do not come into conflict with the life of the papers in a way that either compromises our editorial integrity or falls short of the sort of transparency that our readers would expect. The code is intended to apply to all active outside interests which, should they remain undeclared and become known, would cause a fair-minded reader to question the value of a contribution to the paper by the journalist involved.

These are guidelines rather than one-size-fits-all rules. If you are employed as a columnist — with your views openly on display — you may have more latitude than a staff reporter, who would be expected to bring qualities of objectivity to their work. (The Washington Post's Code has some sound advice: "Reporters should make every effort to remain in the audience, to stay off the stage, to report the news, not to make the news.") If in doubt, consult a head of department, the managing or deputy editors, or the editor himself.

Commercial products No Guardian journalist or freelance primarily associated with GNM should endorse commercial products unless with the express permission of their head of department or managing editor. Neither should they be involved in producing advertisement features (advertorials).

Confidentiality Desk editors with access to personal information relating to other members of staff are required to treat such information as confidential, and not disclose it to anyone except in the course of discharging formal responsibilities.

Conflicts of interest Staff journalists should be sensitive to the possibility that activities outside work (including holding office or being otherwise actively involved in organisations, companies or political parties) could be perceived as having a bearing on — or as coming into conflict with — the integrity of our journalism. Staff should be transparent about any outside personal, philosophical or financial interests that might conflict with their professional performance, or could be perceived to do so.

Declarations of interest

1. It is always necessary to declare an interest when the journalist is writing about something with which he or she has a significant connection. This applies to both staff journalists and freelances. The declaration should be to a head of department or editor during preparation. Full transparency may mean that the declaration should appear in print and on the website.
2. A connection does not have to be a formal one before it is necessary to declare it. Acting in an advisory capacity in the preparation of a report for an organisation, for example, would require a declaration every time the journalist wrote an article referring to it.
3. Some connections are obvious and represent the reason why the writer has been asked to contribute to the paper. These should always be stated at the end of the writer's contribution even if he or she contributes regularly, so long as the writer is writing about his or her area of interest.
4. Generally speaking a journalist should not write about or quote a relative or partner in a piece, even if the relative or partner is an expert in the field in question. If, for any reason, an exception is made to this rule, the connection should be made clear.
5. Commissioning editors should ensure that freelances are aware of these rules and make any necessary declaration.

Declarations of corporate interest The Guardian and Observer are part of a wider group of media companies. We should be careful to acknowledge that relationship in stories. Anyone writing a story concerning GMG-related businesses should seek comments and/or confirmation in the normal way. Staff should familiarise themselves with the companies and interests we have. At the end of this document is a summary of the areas and companies that GMG owns or in which it has an interest. Full details are on the GMG website at <http://www.gmgplc.co.uk/>

Financial reporting

For many years our business desk has maintained a register of personal shares. All staff are expected to list all shares that they own, any transactions in those shares and any other investments which they believe ought to be properly disclosed because of a potential conflict of interest. While it is acceptable for financial members to own shares, it is not acceptable for them to be market traders on a regular basis. It is most important that the register is kept and that all information is up to date. The attention of GNM journalists is also drawn to Section 13 of the PCC Code of Practice (below) and to the PCC's best-practice guidelines on financial journalism (<http://tiny.cc/c7qod>) which can also be found in the "code advice" section of the PCC website, www.pcc.org.uk

The Code:

- prohibits the use of financial information for the profit of journalists or their associates;
- imposes restrictions on journalists writing about shares in which they or their close families have a significant interest without internal disclosure;
- stops journalists dealing in shares about which they have written recently or intend to write in the near future; and
- requires that financial journalists take care not to publish inaccurate material and to distinguish between comment, conjecture and fact. This is particularly important for any journalists making investment recommendations to readers about whether to buy, sell or hold shares.

Freelance work As a general rule avoid freelance writing for house magazines of particular businesses or causes if the contribution could be interpreted as an endorsement of the concern. If in doubt consult your head or department.

Freebies

1. Staff should not use their position to obtain private benefit for themselves or others.
2. GNM will not allow any payment, gift or other advantage to undermine accuracy, fairness or independence. Any attempts to induce favourable editorial treatment through the offer of gifts or favours should be reported to the editor. Where relevant, payments, gifts or other advantages will be disclosed.
3. We should make it clear when an airline, hotel or other interest has borne the cost of transporting or accommodating a journalist. Acceptance of any such offer is conditional on GNM being free to assign and report or not report any resulting story as it sees fit.
4. Except in some areas of travel writing it should never need to be the case that the journalist's partner, family or friends are included in any free arrangement. When a partner, family member or friend accompanies the journalist on a trip, the additional costs should generally be paid for by the journalist or person accompanying the journalist.
5. Staff should not be influenced by commercial considerations — including the interests of advertisers — in the preparation of material for the paper.
6. Gifts other than those of an insignificant value (less than £50) should be politely returned or may be entered for the annual raffle of such items for charity, "the sleaze raffle".

GNM connections Staff members should not use their positions to seek any benefit or advantage in personal business, financial or commercial transactions not afforded to the public generally. Staff should not use our stationery in connection with non-GNM matters or cite a connection with the paper to resolve consumer grievances, get quicker service or seek discount or deals.

Interaction with readers Our most important relationship is the one we have with our readers and site users. Courtesy applies whether an exchange takes place in person, by telephone, letter or email. The company recognises that communication online, eg in blogs and social media domains, can be more informal, brisk and, where a debate is underway, combative — but journalists should be mindful of the guidelines on blogging and social media available on GNM's internal Really Social Media site.

Outside engagements or duties GNM accepts the journalist's right to a private life and the right to take part in civic society. However, staff should inform their immediate editor if, in their capacity as an employee, they intend to:

- Give evidence to any court
- Chair public forums or seminars arranged by professional conference organisers or commercial organisations*

- Undertake any outside employment likely to conflict with their professional duties
- Chair public or political forums or appear on platforms
- Make representations or give evidence to any official body in connection with material that has been published by GNM

*Journalists invited to chair debates or appear on panels as a representative of GNM should not usually accept or request payment for doing so, unless preparation or attendance at the event involves a significant call on private time. Acceptance of payment should be approved in advance by the managing editor having particular regard for other clauses within these guidelines, such as conflict of interest, declarations of interest and endorsement of commercial products. Travel and other reasonable expenses may be accepted. In general, staff journalists should not provide public relations advice, especially to an audience that has paid to attend. Please consult your managing editor if in doubt.

Relationships Staff members should not write about, photograph or make news judgments about any individual related by blood or marriage or with whom the staff member has a close personal, financial or romantic relationship. A staff member who is placed in a circumstance in which the potential for this kind of conflict exists should advise his or her department head.

3. Appendices

Appendix 3.1 Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice

The Editors' Code

All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Code, which includes this preamble and the public interest exceptions below, sets the benchmark for those ethical standards, protecting both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment.

It is essential that an agreed code be honoured not only to the letter but in the full spirit. It should not be interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it constitutes an unnecessary interference with freedom of expression or prevents publication in the public interest.

It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to apply the Code to editorial material in both printed and online versions of publications. They should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial staff and external contributors, including non-journalists, in printed and online versions of publications. Editors should co-operate swiftly with the PCC in the resolution of complaints. Any publication judged to have breached the Code must print the adjudication in full and with due prominence, including headline reference to the PCC.

There may be exceptions to the clauses marked * where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest (see below).

1 Accuracy

- i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures.
- ii) A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion once recognised must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and - where appropriate - an apology published. In cases involving the Commission, prominence should be agreed with the PCC in advance.
- iii) The Press, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.
- iv) A publication must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party, unless an agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published.

2 Opportunity to reply

A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies must be given when reasonably called for.

3 *Privacy

- i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.
- ii) Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent. Account will be taken of the complainant's own public disclosures of information.
- iii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals in private places without their consent.

Note – Private places are public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

4 *Harassment

- i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.
- ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, pursuing or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on their property when asked to leave and must not follow them. If requested, they must identify themselves and whom they represent.
- iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

5 Intrusion into grief or shock

- i) In cases involving personal grief or shock, enquiries and approaches must be made with sympathy and discretion and publication handled sensitively. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings, such as inquests.
- *ii) When reporting suicide, care should be taken to avoid excessive detail about the method used.

6 *Children

- i) Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- ii) A child under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- iii) Pupils must not be approached or photographed at school without the permission of the school authorities.
- iv) Minors must not be paid for material involving children's welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- v) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

7 *Children in sex cases

- 1. The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.
- 2. In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child -
 - i) The child must not be identified.
 - ii) The adult may be identified.
 - iii) The word "incest" must not be used where a child victim might be identified.
 - iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child.

8 *Hospitals

- i) Journalists must identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue enquiries.
- ii) The restrictions on intruding into privacy are particularly relevant to enquiries about individuals in hospitals or similar institutions.

9 *Reporting of Crime

- (i) Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story.
- (ii) Particular regard should be paid to the potentially vulnerable position of children who witness, or are victims of, crime. This should not restrict the right to report legal proceedings.

10 *Clandestine devices and subterfuge

- i) The press must not seek to obtain or publish material acquired by using hidden cameras or clandestine listening devices; or by intercepting private or mobile telephone calls, messages or emails; or by the unauthorised removal of documents or photographs; or by accessing digitally-held private information without consent.
- ii) Engaging in misrepresentation or subterfuge, including by agents or intermediaries, can generally be justified only in the public interest and then only when the material cannot be obtained by other means.

11 Victims of sexual assault

The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so.

12 Discrimination

- i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.
- ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

13 Financial journalism

- i) Even where the law does not prohibit it, journalists must not use for their own profit financial information they receive in advance of its general publication, nor should they pass such information to others.
- ii) They must not write about shares or securities in whose performance they know that they or their close families have a significant financial interest without disclosing the interest to the editor or financial editor.
- iii) They must not buy or sell, either directly or through nominees or agents, shares or securities about which they have written recently or about which they intend to write in the near future.

14 Confidential sources

Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information.

15 Witness payments in criminal trials

i) No payment or offer of payment to a witness - or any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness - should be made in any case once proceedings are active as defined by the Contempt of Court Act 1981.

This prohibition lasts until the suspect has been freed unconditionally by police without charge or bail or the proceedings are otherwise discontinued; or has entered a guilty plea to the court; or, in the event of a not guilty plea, the court has announced its verdict.

*ii) Where proceedings are not yet active but are likely and foreseeable, editors must not make or offer payment to any person who may reasonably be expected to be called as a witness, unless the information concerned ought demonstrably to be published in the public interest and there is an over-riding need to make or promise payment for this to be done; and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure no financial dealings influence the evidence those witnesses give. In no circumstances should such payment be conditional on the outcome of a trial.

*iii) Any payment or offer of payment made to a person later cited to give evidence in proceedings must be disclosed to the prosecution and defence. The witness must be advised of this requirement.

16 *Payment to criminals

i) Payment or offers of payment for stories, pictures or information, which seek to exploit a particular crime or to glorify or glamorise crime in general, must not be made directly or via agents to convicted or confessed criminals or to their associates – who may include family, friends and colleagues.

ii) Editors invoking the public interest to justify payment or offers would need to demonstrate that there was good reason to believe the public interest would be served. If, despite payment, no public interest emerged, then the material should not be published.

The public interest

There may be exceptions to the clauses marked * where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

1. The public interest includes, but is not confined to:

- i) Detecting or exposing crime or serious impropriety
- ii) Protecting public health and safety
- iii) Preventing the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.

2. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself.

3. Whenever the public interest is invoked, the PCC will require editors to demonstrate fully that they reasonably believed that publication, or journalistic activity undertaken with a view to publication, would be in the public interest.

4. The PCC will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain, or will become so.

5. In cases involving children under 16, editors must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to over-ride the normally paramount interest of the child.

Appendix 3.2: CP Scott's essay published in the Manchester Guardian on the centenary of the paper's first issue

CP Scott, Editor, Thursday May 5, 1921

A hundred years is a long time; it is a long time even in the life of a newspaper, and to look back on it is to take in not only a vast development in the thing itself, but a great slice in the life of the nation, in the progress and adjustment of the world.

In the general development the newspaper, as an institution, has played its part, and no small part, and the particular newspaper with which I personally am concerned has also played its part, it is to be hoped, not without some usefulness. I have had my share in it for a little more than fifty years; I have been its responsible editor for only a few months short of its last half-century; I remember vividly its fiftieth birthday; I now have the happiness to share in the celebration of its hundredth. I can therefore speak of it with a certain intimacy of acquaintance. I have myself been part of it and entered into its inner courts. That is perhaps a reason why, on this occasion, I should write in my own name, as in some sort a spectator, rather than in the name of the paper as a member of its working staff.

In all living things there must be a certain unity, a principle of vitality and growth. It is so with a newspaper, and the more complete and clear this unity the more vigorous and fruitful the growth. I ask myself what the paper stood for when first I knew it, what it has stood for since and stands for now. A newspaper has two sides to it. It is a business, like any other, and has to pay in the material sense in order to live. But it is much more than a business; it is an institution; it reflects and it influences the life of a whole community; it may affect even wider destinies. It is, in its way, an instrument of government. It plays on the minds and consciences of men. It may educate, stimulate, assist, or it may do the opposite. It has, therefore, a moral as well as a material existence, and its character and influence are in the main determined by the balance of these two forces. It may make profit or power its first object, or it may conceive itself as fulfilling a higher and more exacting function.

I think I may honestly say that, from the day of its foundation, there has not been much doubt as to which way the balance tipped as far as regards the conduct of the paper whose fine tradition I inherited and which I have had the honour to serve through all my working life. Had it not been so, personally, I could not have served it. Character is a subtle affair, and has many shades and sides to it. It is not a thing to be much talked about, but rather to be felt. It is the slow deposit of past actions and ideals. It is for each man his most precious possession, and so it is for that latest growth of time the newspaper. Fundamentally it implies honesty, cleanness, courage, fairness, a sense of duty to the reader and the community. A newspaper is of necessity something of a monopoly, and its first duty is to shun the temptations of monopoly. Its primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong. Comment is free, but facts are sacred. "Propaganda," so called, by this means is hateful. The voice of opponents no less than that of friends has a right to be heard. Comment also is justly subject to a self-imposed restraint. It is well to be frank; it is even better to be fair. This is an ideal. Achievement in such matters is hardly given to man. We can but try, ask pardon for shortcomings, and there leave the matter.

But, granted a sufficiency of grace, to what further conquests may we look, what purpose serve, what task envisage? It is a large question, and cannot be fully answered. We are faced with a new and enormous power and a growing one. Whither is the young giant tending? What gifts does he bring? How will he exercise his privilege and powers? What influence will he exercise on the minds of men and on our public life? It cannot be pretended that an assured and entirely satisfactory answer can be given to such questions. Experience is in some respects disquieting. The development has not been all in the direction which we should most desire.

One of the virtues, perhaps almost the chief virtue, of a newspaper is its independence. Whatever its position or character, at least it should have a soul of its own. But the tendency of newspapers, as of other businesses, in these days is towards amalgamation. In proportion, as the function of a newspaper has developed and its organisation expanded, so have its costs increased. The smaller newspapers have had a hard struggle; many of them have disappeared. In their place we have great organisations controlling a whole series of publications of various kinds and even of differing or opposing politics. The process may be inevitable, but clearly there are drawbacks. As organisation grows personality may tend to disappear. It is much to control one newspaper well; it is perhaps beyond the reach of any man, or any body of men, to control half a dozen with equal success. It is possible to exaggerate the danger, for the public is not undiscerning. It recognises the authentic voices of conscience and conviction when it finds them, and it has a shrewd intuition of what to accept and what to discount.

This is a matter which in the end must settle itself, and those who cherish the older ideal of a newspaper need

not be dismayed. They have only to make their papers good enough in order to win, as well as to merit, success, and the resources of a newspaper are not wholly measured in pounds, shillings, and pence. Of course the thing can only be done by competence all round, and by that spirit of co-operation right through the working staff which only a common ideal can inspire.

There are people who think you can run a newspaper about as easily as you can poke a fire, and that knowledge, training, and aptitude are superfluous endowments. There have even been experiments on this assumption, and they have not met with success. There must be competence, to start with, on the business side, just as there must be in any large undertaking, but it is a mistake to suppose that the business side of a paper should dominate, as sometimes happens, not without distressing consequences.

A newspaper, to be of value, should be a unity, and every part of it should equally understand and respond to the purposes and ideals which animate it. Between its two sides there should be a happy marriage, and editor and business manager should march hand in hand, the first, be it well understood, just an inch or two in advance. Of the staff much the same thing may be said. They should be a friendly company. They need not, of course, agree on every point, but they should share in the general purpose and inheritance. A paper is built up upon their common and successive labours, and their work should never be task work, never merely dictated. They should be like a racing boat's crew, pulling well together, each man doing his best because he likes it, and with a common and glorious goal.

That is the path of self-respect and pleasure; it is also the path of success. And what a work it is! How multiform, how responsive to every need and every incident of life! What illimitable possibilities of achievement and of excellence! People talk of "journalese" as though a journalist were of necessity a pretentious and sloppy writer; he may be, on the contrary, and very often is, one of the best in the world. At least he should not be content to be much less. And then the developments. Every year, almost every day, may see growth and fresh accomplishments, and with a paper that is really alive, it not only may, but does. Let anyone take a file of this paper, or for that matter any one of half a dozen other papers, and compare its whole make-up and leading features today with what they were five years ago, ten years ago, twenty years ago, and he will realise how large has been the growth, how considerable the achievement. And this is what makes the work of a newspaper worthy and interesting. It has so many sides, it touches life at so many points, at every one there is such possibility of improvement and excellence. To the man, whatever his place on the paper, whether on the editorial or business, or even what may be regarded as the mechanical side — this also vitally important in its place — nothing should satisfy short of the best, and the best must always seem a little ahead of the actual. It is here that ability counts and that character counts, and it is on these that a newspaper, like every great undertaking, if it is to be worthy of its power and duty, must rely.

Appendix 3.3. Areas of interest and companies held by GMG

Guardian Media Group's portfolio comprises wholly owned businesses, joint ventures and other investments.

There are three wholly owned operating divisions: Guardian News and Media (GNM), GMG Radio and GMG Property Services; and two joint ventures with Apax Partners: Trader Media Group and Emap. The Group also has a long-term investment fund, with Cambridge Associates as advisors.

GNM publishes the Guardian, Observer, [guardian.co.uk](https://www.guardian.co.uk) and other titles such as Guardian Weekly.

GMG Radio operates regional stations across the UK under the Real Radio, Smooth Radio and Rock Radio brands, as well as a number of websites. It also has a stake in MXR, a holder of regional digital multiplex licences.

Trader Media Group (jointly owned with Apax Partners) publishes the Auto Trader website and magazine, as well as a number of other classified advertising titles. It has centres across the UK and subsidiaries in Ireland, Italy and South Africa.

Other interests include shares in Seven Publishing, Development Hell, Spectrum Venture Management, Press Association and Radio Advertising Bureau. GMG also has full ownership of the print plant GPC Manchester.